

The Origin of the Nāgaras and the Nāgarī-alphabet.—By

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A vehement discussion is going on amongst antiquarians and Sanskrit scholars concerning the origin of the Nāgarī-alphabet. Dr. Fitz-Edward Hall, the late Principal of the Benares Sanskrit College, was the first to raise the question. With the view of ascertaining the date of the Nāgarī-alphabet and the origin of its name, he has sent letters to the best Indian Paṇḍits and oriental scholars requesting them to acquaint him with their individual views upon the points in question.

Having had the honour of being consulted by two of the gentlemen addressed by him, I now venture to lay the following suggestions before the Society, in the hope that they may give rise to further inquiries.

I surmise that the following are the main points to be noticed in order to gain an idea of the origin of the Nāgarī-alphabet :—

1. What is the cause of the name Nāgara ?
2. Where did the name arise from ?
3. Who gave the name, and have they any connection with the alphabet ?
4. Date of its origin.
5. Development and progress of the Nāgarākṣara.

Some Indian Paṇḍits derive the name from *nagara* (a city). The letters received by Paṇḍit Çambhucandra Vidyāratna from Paṇḍit Vāmaṇācārya and others of Benares are to the same effect. The other Paṇḍits of Benares explain the word *dēva-nāgara* as ‘born in a divine city.’ Others say that this alphabet was originally used in the *dēvalōka* and hence its name *dēva-nāgara*. In my humble opinion, the above conjectures cannot be taken as accurate. For if the explanation of the expression be such as “नगरे भवं (born in a city)” the word नगर may mean any city,—and there can be no certainty as to what city is meant. According to the rules of rhetoric, we are, when pointing to a particular alphabetic designation required to mention the exact place or person it

owes its origin to. But the upholders of the first theory like the advocates of the second, have not done so. Consequently the conclusion नगरे भवं, (born in a city) and hence the name *Nāgara* falls to the ground.

In the well-known encyclopædic lexicon the 'Çabda-kalpa-druma' edited by the late Sir Rājā Rādhākānta Dēva, and in the *Vācaspatya*, we find the signification of the word *Nāgara* to be 'akṣara of the *Nāgara-dēça*.' But as no authority is adduced in support of it, the later dictionaries have not followed this explanation.

Dr. Isaac Taylor states in his 'Alphabet,' Vol. II, p. 349.

'The meaning of the term *Nāgarī* has been much disputed. It has been conjectured that it was originally the local alphabet of Benares and has been explained as the city-alphabet from *nagara*, a city. Dr. Burnell is inclined to believe that it was *Naga-lipi* or serpent-writing. (Burnell, *S. Indian Pal.*, p. 52). It was thus understood and translated at the time when the ancient Tibetan version of the *Lalita Vistara* was made. A third hypothesis explains it as the writing of the *Nāgara* Brāhmaṇs of Gujrāt, and a fourth as that of the *Shāh* kings, who were called the *nāgas* or snakes.'

He also adds—'The term *Dēva-nāgarī*, which would mean the divine or sacred *nāgarī* is not used by the natives of India, and seems to have been invented by some ingenious Anglo-Indian about the end of the last century. It has, however, established itself in works on Indian Palæography, and may be conveniently retained to denote that particular type of the *Nāgarī* character employed in printed books for the sacred Sanskrit literature, while the generic term *Nāgarī* may serve as the designation of the whole class of Vernacular alphabets of which the *Dēva-nāgarī* is the literary type'. (p. 349).

From the facts and materials, I have been able to collect, I arrive at the conclusion, that this alphabet was first devised by a class of men, designated *Nāgara*, and in a certain place also called *Nagara*: and this is why the characters go under the name of *Nāgarākṣara* or *Nāgarī-lipi*.

About 750 years ago Paṇḍita Ṣeṣa Kṛṣṇa¹ thus gives an account of different languages in his Prākṛta-candrikā : —

महाराष्ट्री तथावन्ती शौरसेन्यर्धमागधी ।

वाङ्गीकी मागधी चैव षडेता दाक्षिणात्यजाः ॥²

ब्राचखडो लाटवैदर्भावुपनागरनागरी ।

वार्वरावन्य-पाञ्चाल-टाक्क-मालव-कैकयाः ॥

गौडोङ्ग-दैव-पाञ्चाल्य-प्राख्य-कौन्तल-सैहलाः ।

कालिङ्ग-प्राच्य-काणाट-काञ्चन-द्राविड-गौर्जराः ॥

आभीरो मध्यदेशीयः सूक्ष्मभेदव्यवस्थिताः ॥

सप्तविंशत्यपभ्रंशा वैडालादिप्रभेदतः ॥

‘Mahārāṣṭrī, Avanti, Çaurasēni, Ardh-māgadhī, Vāhlikī, Māga-dhī; these six are original (Prākṛt) languages and they originated from Southern India. Brācaṇḍa, Lāṭa, Vaidarbha, Upanāgara, Nāgara, Vārvara, Āvantya, Pāñcāla, Ṭakka, Mālava, Kaikaya, Gauḍa, Uḍra, Daiva, Pāçcātya, Pāṇḍya, Kauntala, Saimhala, Kāliṅga, Prāçya, Kār-ṇāta, Kāñcya, Drāviḍa, Gaurjara, Ābhira, Madhya-dēçiya, Vaiḍāla: these 27 are corrupt dialects and differ more or less from one another.’

It is clear from the above ṣlokas that like the Mahārāṣṭrī, Çaura-sēni, Māgadhī, &c., which derived their names from the provinces or their people, the corrupt forms of languages, viz., Nāgara, Upanāgara and Daiva, were current in some part of the country whose name they bear.

The next point to consider is, from what place did the name become current ?

In India we find more than one tract of land having the name Nagara. In Bengal we find Nagara which was formerly the capital of Birbhūm. The famous port Nagara is in Tanjore. In Mysore an extensive division goes by that name; in this division there are a certain village and a *taluk* of the name of Nagara. A remarkable town named Nagara, and an ancient town called Nagarakōṭa are situated on the Bīas in the district of Kangra, Panjāb. Over and above, we find Nagaravasti in Darbhanga, Nagaraparkar (town) in Sindh, and Nagara-

¹ Also known under the name of Kṛṣṇa Paṇḍita, son of Nara-simha, sprung in the Ṣeṣa-vaṃça. According to Dr. Bhāṇḍarkar the probable date of Rāma-candra nephew of Ṣeṣa-Kṛṣṇa is about 1150 A.D. (R. G. Bhāṇḍarkar's Report of the Sauskrit MSS. 1883-84, p. 59).

² Another reading ‘अष्टेता दाक्षिणात्यजाः ।’

khās (a city) in the district of Basti. Moreover there is a number of ancient villages called Nagaram found in the Deccan.

We are also in similar difficulty with regard to the name Nāgara. In North-Bengal, there are two rivers of that name :—one running from Purniyā to Dinājpur; another from Bagurā to Rājshāhi. In the district of Dacca there is a village of that name. In Rājputānā proper there are some 9 or 10 places, all bearing the name Nāgara, of which three may be called towns. One of these three is in the state of Jai-pur, another in Mārṅwār, and the remaining one 10 miles south-west of Ranthambhōr. In the Santal Parganahs, there is a fortified village called Nāgara. Close to Chitor in Rājputānā there is a very ancient town called Nāgarī. By the punch-marked coin, discovered here and its concomitants, Sir Alex. Cunningham has proved conclusively that this town was established many centuries before the birth of Christ. But he says that the ancient name of this locality was Tāmbravatī-nagarī.

None of the above-mentioned places affords us any hint by which we may ascertain the mother-country of the Nāgarī-alphabet.

There lives a powerful tribe named Nāgara, in the mountainous tract of Kabul in Afghanistan. Many days have not elapsed since these Nāgaras declared war against the British Government. A friend of mine has jumped to the conclusion, that the Nāgara-alphabet has been named after this tribe. He is of opinion that as the Aryans have gradually entered into India from Central Asia; so the alphabet of this tribe somehow or other found its way into India. I cannot support the theory of my friend. These Nāgara-men, although they belong at present to the religion of Islām, are all descended from the Rajputs; and they point to Rājputānā, as their former residence. Under such circumstances how can it be imagined that the Nāgarākṣara was imported into India from the North of Kabul?

Besides the above, there is another Nagara, an extensive division in the district of Aḥmadnagar in the Bombay Presidency. The area of the tract is 619 sq. miles.¹ Here there is a class of Brāhmanas styled Nāgara. Aḥmadnagar is also called Nagara, but only by the natives of that place. They say that the tract was well-known as Nagar long before the establishment of the present town in 1411 A.D. by Sulṭān Aḥmad. These Nāgara Brāhmanas generally look upon the Nāgara-khaṇḍa of the Skanda-purāna as the authority regarding their origin. It is stated in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa that Nagara is another name for Hāṭakēṣvara on the Sarasvatī. The Nāgara Brāhmanas of the Nagara division assert that the Hāṭakēṣvara of the Nāgara-khaṇḍa is no other than the ancient

¹ *Bombay Gazetteer*, Vol. VII p. 608.

Hātakēçvara temple in Çri-guṇḍī on the river Sarasvatī in that division.¹ Nagara or Aḥmadnagar was within the boundary of the Hātakēçvara-kṣētra. Most of the sacred places of pilgrimage (तौथे) mentioned in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa, were in this Nagara division. Of these nearly all have been ravaged by the Muḥammadan invaders. Siddhēçvara, Nāganātha, Hātakēçvara and a few others are the only surviving shrines.

If we rely upon the veracity of these Nāgara Brāhmaṇas, we must conclude that this spot is the ancient Nagara, as related in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa. But though the Pāṇḍās of the Hātakēçvara of Çri-guṇḍī may endeavour to give fame to the spot by identifying it with that of Nāgara-khaṇḍa, it is certainly not the ancient Hātakēçvara mentioned in that work. The shrine of this Hātakēçvara was erected long after the establishment of the ancient Hātakēçvara.

It is related in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa that a Nāgara Brāhmaṇa by name Campa-çarman, was excommunicated for accepting the gift of an individual named Puṣpa. He, being renounced by his kith and kin, quitted the city and began to dwell in a certain place on the right bank of the Sarasvatī. His descendants became known under the title of *Vāhya-nāgara*. These Vāhya-nāgaras in imitation of the ancient Hātakēçvara as described in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa, planted the present Hātakēçvara on the right bank of the river Sarasvatī at Çri-guṇḍī. According to the Nāgara-khaṇḍa, Nagara is on the north side of the Sarasvatī and is within the boundaries of Hātakēçvara which extend 5 krōças or 10 miles. But our present Aḥmadnagar is more than 10 miles from Çri-guṇḍī: moreover, the river Sarasvatī does not flow close to it. These facts prevent me from taking Aḥmadnagar as the early dwelling-place of the Nāgara Brāhmaṇas. Nor do we find any tradition to the effect that Nāgarī-alphabet sprang from that place.

Origin of the Nāgaras.

I learn from a note received from a friend that the Nāgara Paṇḍits of Gujarāt maintain that the Nāgarī-alphabet was originally invented by their ancestors. Many Nāgara Brāhmaṇas still live in Gujarāt. They consider themselves superior to all other Brāhmaṇas.² The Hindū

¹ List of Antiquarian Remains in Bombay Presidency, by J. Burgess, p. 107.

² The Nāgara-Brāhmaṇas still recite the following Çlōka to ascertain their superiority over all other Brāhmaṇas:—

अष्टा गावः पशूनां च यथा पद्मसमुद्भव ।

विप्राणामिह सर्वेषां तथा अष्टा हि नागराः ॥

(नागरखण्ड १६९ । १५)

kings of Gujarāt have shown their reverence towards these Nāgara Brāhmaṇas from very ancient times. One cannot fail to notice the hereditary employments of these Brāhmaṇas as ministers, counsellors, &c., at the highest and most important functionaries of the state. These Brāhmaṇas also allude to the authority of the Skanda-purāṇa for their origin. The Nāgara-khaṇḍa thus speaks of the origin of the Nāgara Brāhmaṇas :—

Camatkāra, the king of Ānartta, was once afflicted with leprosy. Being unable to get rid of the malady, he despaired of his life. One day he came to the hermitage of Viṣvāmitra and stated his misfortune. The ascetics of the hermitage were moved to pity by the lamentations of the king and advised him to bathé in the Çañkha-tirtha. Bathing there he recovered from leprosy. Then he built close to that Çañkha-tirtha a city named Camatkāra-pura, which extended for two miles. Picturesque structures were there raised by his orders; and Kulina Brāhmaṇas, well-versed in the Vēdas, and other religious Brāhmaṇas were invited from distant quarters to inhabit the town. A few years after, there was born amongst them the learned Citra-çarman. Practising penance he was able to propitiate Mahādēva, who to accomplish his desire appeared in the form of Hātakēçvara. People from different parts took to frequenting the place to have a sight of the Hātakēçvara-liṅga. The Brāhmaṇas of Camatkāra-pura began to consider that, intrinsically Citra-çarman was in no way superior to them; but as he had earned honour and respect of the public by instituting a permanent object of glory, why should not they? Reflecting thus, they all fell to practising austere penance. Mahādēva became propitiated and appeared before the Camatkāra-pura Brāhmaṇas, who were then divided into 68 *gōtras*. Mahādēva said, 'There are in all 68 Çaiva-kṣētras (places of Çiva). Dividing myself into 68 parts I always reside in these places. Now to satisfy your object I will appear here in 68 forms.' Accordingly there were erected 68 shrines, and each *gōtra* devoted itself to the worship of a separate form of Çiva. (Nāgara-khaṇḍa, chs. 106 and 107.)

Once upon a time the king of Ānartta became aware that a heavy calamity was brooding over his peaceful dominions owing to the wrath of the presiding planet of his son then about to be born. He called for all the great astrologers of the age, who all concurrently advised him to observe expiatory rites through the medium of competent Brāhmaṇas. The king of Ānartta had already established the Brāhmaṇas of the 68 *gōtras* in Camatkāra-pura, where he also had beautiful edifices built for them. Now, instructed by the astrologers, he came in person to Camatkāra-pura, and solicited the Brāhmaṇas to perform the

necessary religious rites for the welfare of his future son. Sixteen Brāhmaṇas were then employed to perform propitiatory and sacrificial observances.

While these religious rites were being performed there went on, in the capital of Ānartta, great and solemn festivities in order to celebrate the birth of the prince. But in the midst of these entertainments dark calamities began to make their appearance. Consequent upon the evil influence of the star presiding over the prince's fortune, the king's horses, elephants, chariots and even his dominions began to grow thinner and thinner. At this the Brāhmaṇas of Camatkāra-pura became highly exasperated. They observed, 'We sixteen Brāhmaṇas are without the slightest departure from rules, performing the due sacrifices; and yet no good comes of it: let us therefore imprecate curses upon the god of fire.' At this juncture, Agni-dēva (the Fire-god) appeared before them and exclaimed: 'Oh Brāhmaṇas, do not imprecate curses upon me under the influence of unjust wrath. Each of your offerings is going to ruin through the misdemeanour of Trijāta, one among you who are performing the sacrifices and other religious rites. For him, the sun and the other heavenly bodies do not accept your offerings: and this is why pestilence and mortality are day by day increasing in the kingdom. Renew your sacrifice, banishing this vile Brāhmaṇa from your company: then fortune and health shall smile upon the king, and perdition shall await his enemies.' Hearing the words of Agni, the Brāhmaṇas were very much ashamed, and said that it was impossible for them to believe that Trijāta was polluting their *Hōma* preparations. Agni replied, 'Purify yourselves by bathing in the water of my perspiration in the sacrificial-pit (*Hōma-kuṇḍa*). Rest assured, that your preparations have been corrupted by that man, on whose body appear pustules when he emerges out of the water.' In obedience to the dictates of Agni, they, one after another, bathed in the sacrificial-pit: but pustules were seen on the person of Trijāta only. Overwhelmed with shame, Trijāta was then unable to uplift his down-cast head; agony and repentance overcame him and he determined to retire to the jungle. Now in fact this Trijāta was a great scholar, well versed in the Vēdas; and for the disgrace incurred upon him, his mother was to be blamed. Becoming alive to his own wretched condition he applied himself to practise austere penance in a secluded forest.

Highly delighted with the rigour and austerity of Trijāta's penance, Mahādēva appeared before him. Trijāta fell prostrate at his feet and thus outpoured his heart:—'Oh God of the gods, I have been, by my mother's fault, very much disgraced before the people of Camatkāra-pura and the king of Ānartta. Be thou so gracious to contrive

some means, by which I may rise pre-eminent amongst all the Brāhmaṇas.' Mahādēva answered, 'Wait for some time. Days are not distant, when your desire will be fulfilled.' Saying this the god vanished.

Meanwhile a great disaster occurred in Camatkāra-pura. On one Nāga-pañcamī day, Kratha, son of Dēva-rāja of the Maudgalya gōtra, went together with some other Brāhmaṇas to bathe in the Nāgatirtha and there taking Rudra-māla the son of the serpent-king, for a common water-serpent, killed him with the stroke of a rod. At this many venomous snakes, responding to their king's order, crept into Camatkāra-pura in overwhelming numbers. Owing to the terrible destruction caused by these poisonous snakes, all the men of Camatkāra-pura young and old, began to flee away, leaving their houses and articles behind them. Brāhmaṇas in hundreds breathed their last, being bitten by snakes. Some Brāhmaṇas becoming exceedingly appalled sought refuge in that forest where Trijāta was engaged in penance. Hearing of the story of their misfortune, Trijāta encouraged them, saying, 'you have no occasion to fear.' Ere long he again became absorbed in meditation of Mahādēva. The god appeared and said, 'I am giving you an incantation (a mantra) the mere utterance of which shall render even the most ferocious of the venomous snakes void of poison.' The *mantra* runs thus:—

गरं विषमिति प्रोक्तं न तत्रास्ति च साम्यतम् ।
 मत्प्रसादात्त्वया ह्येतदुच्चर्यं ब्राह्मणोत्तमम् ॥
 नगरं नगरं चैतच्छ्रुत्वा ये पन्नगाधमाः ।
 तत्र स्थास्यन्ति ते वध्या भविष्यन्ति यथा सुखम् ॥
 अद्य प्रभृति तत्स्थानं नगराख्यं धरातले ।
 भविष्यति सुविख्यातं तव कौर्तिविवर्धनम् ॥
 तथान्योऽपि च यो विप्रो नागरः शुद्धवंशजः ।
 नगराख्येन मन्त्रेण अभिमन्त्र्य त्रिधा जलम् ॥
 प्राणिनं कालसंदष्टमपि मृत्युवशंगतम् ।
 प्रकरिष्यति जीवन्तं प्रक्षिप्य वदने स्वयम् ॥

(नागरखण्ड १०७। ७८-८२)

'O my good Brāhmaṇa, you are to proclaim in the city that the word *gara* signifies poison, but by my favour there is no poison at present. Any vile snakes that may dare to remain there after hearing you utter '*na garam na garam*' (i.e., there is no poison, no poison). may

be killed at your pleasure. This famous place, which contributes to your glory, will from this day be known to the world by the name of *Nagara*. So also any other *Nagara* Brāhmaṇa, born of a pure family, will be able to restore to life any snake-bitten animal fallen into the clutches of death by besprinkling its face with water, enchanted thrice with the *mantra* called *Nagara*.'

Saying this the god disappeared. Trijāta accompanied by those Brāhmaṇas came to *Camatkāra-pura*. They all conjointly began to cry aloud *nagaram, nagaram*. By the effect of this *Siddha-mantra*, the snakes of *Camatkāra-pura* were rendered poisonless, and struggled to make their escape, while thousands perished. Such are the vicissitudes of fortune! That very Trijāta, who was once overwhelmed by acute mortification of mind, and shame and disgrace, now overflowed with joy to find himself the object of public praise and honour. By his influence the name of *Camatkāra-pura* was changed to *Nagara*, and its Brāhmaṇas came to be known as *Nāgaras*. (*Nāgara-khaṇḍa* chs. 106-108).

Thus, on the authority of the *Nāgara-khaṇḍa* the former name of *Nagara* was *Camatkāra-pura* after the name of its founder *Camatkāra* king of *Ānartta*. *Hātakēçvara* is another name of this place. According to the *Nāgara-khaṇḍa*, *Hātakēçvara-kṣētra* is situated at the south-west of *Ānartta-dēça*, and its boundary stretches 10 miles in circumference, while the town itself extended for 2 miles.¹ It is bounded on the east by *Gayā-çirṣa*, on the west by *Viṣṇu-pada*, and on the north and south by *Gōkarṇēçvara*.² Within the boundaries of this *Hāta-*

1 अस्मिन्नैतदिग्यागे देशे चानर्तसंज्ञके ॥
तत्राय स्यापितं लिङ्गं हाटककेन सुरीत्तमैः ।
एतत्संकौच्येते लोके पाताले हाटकेश्वरम् ॥
(नागरखण्ड ४। ५१ -- ५२)

नगरं कल्पयामास स्थाने तत्र महत्तमम् ।
प्राकारेण सुतुङ्गेन परिखार्धेन सर्वतः ।
आयाम-व्यासतश्चैव क्रोशमात्रं मनोहरम् ॥
(नागरखण्ड ११। ६३ -- ६४)

2 पञ्चक्रोशप्रमाणेन चेष्टं ब्राह्मणसत्तमाः ।
आयामव्यासतश्चैव चमत्कारपुरोद्भवम् ॥
प्राच्यां तस्य गयाशीर्षं पश्चिमेन हरैः पदम् ।
दक्षिणीत्तरथोश्चैव गोकर्णेश्वरसंज्ञितौ ॥
हाटकेश्वरसंज्ञस्तु पूर्वमासौष्ट्विज्जीत्तमः ।
तत्चेष्टं प्रथितं लोके सर्वपातकनाशनम् ॥
यतः प्रभृति विप्रेभ्यो दत्तं तेन महात्मना ।
चमत्कारेण तत्स्थानं नाम्ना ख्यातिं ततो गतम् ॥
(नागरखण्ड १६। ३ -- ६)

kēçvara-kṣētra are the shrines of Acalēçvara, Gōkarnēçvara, Gayā-çirṣa, Mārkaṇḍēyēçvara, Citrēçvara, Dhundhumārēçvara, Yayātiçvara, Ānandēçvara, Kapilēçvara, Kalanēçvara, Ānarttēçvara, Çūdrakēçvara, Ajapālīçvara, Bāṇēçvara, Lakṣmaṇēçvara, Trijātēçvara, Ambārēvatī, Kēdārēçvara, Vṛṣabhanātha, Satyasandhēçvara, Aṭēçvara, Dharmarājēçvara, Miṣṭānnadēçvara, Citrāṅgadēçvara, Amarakēçvara, Vaṭēçvara, Makarēçvara, Kālēçvara, Puṣpāditya, &c., as well as hundreds of sacred places (*tirthas*), named Pātāla-Gaṅgā, Gaṅgā-Yamunā, Prācī (*i.e.*, eastern) Sarasvatī, Nāga-tīrtha, Çaṅkha-tīrtha, Mṛga-tīrtha, Liṅgabhēdōdbhava-tīrtha, Rudrā-vartta, Rāma-hrada, Çakra-tīrtha, Mātī-tīrtha, Mudhāra-tīrtha, &c.

Elsewhere in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa Mahādēva says :—‘Naimiṣāraṇya, Kēdāra-nātha, Puṣkara, Bhūmi-jāṅgala, Vārāṇasī, Kurukṣētra, Prabhāsa, and Hāṭakēçvara are the principal of the sacred-places. He who in proper veneration bathes in these eight *Tīrthas*, reaps the fruit of bathing in all the *Tīrthas*. Even these eight sacred places have their best, and Hāṭakēçvara is that one. All the *tīrthas* in the world are, by my order, present in Hāṭakēçvara. Therefore in the Kali-yuga persons eager of salvation should betake themselves to the Hāṭakēçvara-kṣētra, which is attended by all the *Tīrthas*.’ (Nāgara-khaṇḍa, ch. 103.)

Mr. Wilson in his *Indian castes* says :—‘The word Nāgara is the adjective form of Nagara, a city. It is applied to several (six) principal castes of Brāhmaṇas in Gujarāt getting their designations respectively from certain towns in the north-eastern portions of that province.’¹

It has been already remarked in harmony with the statement of the Nāgara-khaṇḍa, that Hāṭakēçvara was named Nagara, subsequent to Trijāta’s making the land snakeless. The Brāhmaṇas who were brought by him became known under the name of Nāgara from their inhabiting that city.²

The Nāgara Brāhmaṇas of Gujarāt maintain that Ānandapura (the present Baḍanagara) was their original dwelling-place. This place is in the district of Kaḍi in Gujarāt, and forms a part of the state of the Gāikwār of Baroda. Some antiquarians have alluded to Nagara-Ānanda-pura as the name of this place.³ It seems to me that perhaps the Nāgara Brahmaṇas of Ānanda-pura used the name of Baḍa-nagara

¹ Wilson, *Indian Castes*, Vol. II., p. 96.

² It is stated in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa, that Hāṭakēçvara was, previous to the arrival of Trijāta, depopulated by the horrible destruction spread over the land by the poisonous snakes. Trijāta again populated it by Brāhmaṇas of 84 *gōtras* brought from several other places. (*Nāgara-khaṇḍa*, ch. 108.)

³ *Epigraphia Indica*, Vol. I. 295.

for their native town, in order to distinguish it from the comparatively new city, Nagara, which the excommunicated Vāhya-nāgaras founded and named in imitation of their mother-land.¹

The famous shrine of Hāṭakēçvara is still existing in Baḍa-nagara ; and the Brāhmaṇas of this locality still recite holy-texts (Çānti-pāṭha) for the welfare of their king the Gāikwār. Even now, thousands of pilgrims resort to Hāṭakēçvara from all parts of Western India. But strangely enough, most of the inhabitants of Bengal have not even heard its name.

The above-mentioned temples and *tīrthas* as described in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa can even now be identified in Baḍa-nagara and its environments of 10 miles. The local river Sarasvatī is held, by the natives, in the same veneration as the Ganges.

The Nāgara Brāhmaṇas maintain that there was a time, when millions of pilgrims annually came to Hāṭakēçvara-kṣētra from different parts of India. The attendants of its Pāṇḍās travelled all over India inducing people to visit this sacred place. Indeed many Nāgara Brāhmaṇas are, even now, met with in various parts of the Deccan. These Brāhmaṇas still write all their sacred books in the Nāgarī characters. Even far away in Drāviḍa and Karnāṭa, where all the other natives use their provincial alphabets in writing, these Nāgara-Brāhmaṇas, though they have, in the course of centuries, lost their mother-tongue and adopted that of the surrounding people amongst whom they live, still adhere to their own tribal Nāgarī character.

With respect to the Nāgara Brāhmaṇas at the outskirts of Vijayanagara and Ānaguṇḍi, Mr. Huddleston Stokes states :—‘They appear originally to have come from the countries north-east of Nāgara, and to have settled here under the Ānaguṇḍi and Vijayanagar kings. They speak Kānarese only, but their books are in the Nāgarī and Bālabōdha² character.’³

A careful perusal of what has been recorded above, leads one to decide that the Brāhmaṇas brought by Trijāta came to be known by the name of Nāgara, their language and their alphabet by the name of Nāgara or Nāgarī from their residing in the city of Nagara. That they have a peculiar connection with the Nāgarākṣara is well

¹ We see in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa that the excommunicated Campa-çarman and his companion set up the images of Nagarēçvara and Nagarāditya on the right-bank of the river Sarasvatī (*Nāgara-khaṇḍa*, ch. 155). So it is not improbable that the Vāhya-nāgaras established here a town named Nagara.

² Bālabōdha is a modern form of the Nāgarī. (See Burnell, *S. I. Palæography*, p. 44.)

³ *Indian Antiquary*, 1874, p. 230.

exemplified by the alphabet, made use of by other Nāgara Brāhmaṇas long inhabiting different countries.

Origin of the Nāgarī-alphabet.

Most of our Indian Paṇḍits hold that the origin of the Nāgarī-alphabet dates from the invention of the system of writing. Paṇḍita Gaurī-çaṅkara Hirācānd of Udayapura, author of the Prācina-lipi-mālā, also asserts the same theory. But in my humble opinion, this theory is quite without any foundation.

The books which describe all the earliest *lipis* of India do not speak anything at all of Nāgarī. In support of this, I quote here some proofs.

In the early Buddhist work named the *Lalita-vistara*, it is stated that when Viçvāmitra Dārakācārya came to teach Siddhārtha the art of writing, the prince previous to his inculcation, spoke of the following 64 kinds of *lipis*¹:—1 *Brāhmī*, 2 *Kharōṣṭī*, 3 *Puṣkarasāri*, 4 *Aṅga*, 5 *Vaṅga*, 6 *Maḡadha*, 7 *Māṅgalya*, 8 *Manuṣya*, 9 *Aṅguliya*, 10 *Çakāri*, 11 *Brahma-vallī*, 12 *Drāviḍa*, 13 *Kināri*, 14 *Dakṣiṇa*, 15 *Ugra*, 16 *Saṅkhyā*, 17 *Anulōma*, 18 *Darada*, 19 *Khāsya*, 20 *Cīna*, 21 *Hūna*, 22 *Madhyākṣara-vistara*, 23 *Puṣpa*, 24 *Dēva*, 25 *Nāga*, 26 *Yakṣa*, 27 *Gandharva*, 28 *Kinnara*, 29 *Mahōraḡa*, 30 *Asura*, 31 *Garuḍa*, 32 *Mṛga-cakra*, 33 *Cakra*, 34 *Vāyumarut*, 35 *Bhauma-dēva*, 36 *Antarikṣa-dēva*, 37 *Uttarakuru-dvīpa*, 38 *Apara-gauḍa*, 39 *Pūrva-vidēha*, 40 *Utkṣēpa*, 41 *Nikṣēpa*, 42 *Vikṣēpa*, 43 *Prakṣēpa*, 44 *Sāgara*, 45 *Vajra*, 46 *Lēkha-pratīlēkha*, 47 *Anudruta*, 48 *Çatrāvarta*, 49 *Gaṇanā-vartta*, 50 *Utkṣepā-vartta*, 51 *Nikṣepāvartta*, 52 *Padalikhita*, 53 *Dvirūttarapadasandhi*, 54 *Daçōttarapadasandhi*, 55 *Adhyāhārīṇī*, 56 *Sarvaruta-saṅgrahaṇī*, 57 *Vidyānulōmā*, 58 *Vimīçrita*, 59 *Rṣitapastaptā*, 60 *Rōcamānā*, 61 *Dharaṇī-prēkṣaṇa*, 62 *Sarvasādhi-niṣyandā*, 63 *Sarvasāra-saṅgrahaṇī*, and 64 *Sarvabhūta-ruta-grahaṇī*.¹

1 अथ वोधिसत्त्व उरगसारचन्दनमयं लिपिफलकमादाय दिव्यवर्णकं सुवर्णैतिलकं समन्तान्दण्डिणरत्नप्रत्युर्णं विश्वामित्रमाचार्यमेवाह । कतमां भो उपाध्याय लिपिं मे शिचयिष्यसि । ब्राह्मीं खरोष्ट्रीं पुष्करसारीं अङ्ग-लिपिं वङ्ग-लिपिं मगध-लिपिं माङ्गल्य-लिपिं मनुष्य-लिपिं अङ्गुलीय-लिपिं शकारि-लिपिं ब्रह्मवल्ली-लिपिं द्राविड-लिपिं किनारि-लिपिं दक्षिण-लिपिं उग्र-लिपिं संख्या-लिपिं अनुलोम-लिपिं अर्धधनुर्लिपिं दरद-लिपिं खास्य-लिपिं चीन-लिपिं क्लृण-लिपिं मध्याक्षर-विस्तर-लिपिं पुष्प-लिपिं देव-लिपिं नाग-लिपिं यक्ष-लिपिं गन्धर्व-लिपिं किन्नर-लिपिं महोरग-लिपिं असुर-लिपिं गरुड-लिपिं मृगचक्र-लिपिं चक्र-लिपिं वायु-मरुलिपिं भौमदेव-लिपिं अन्नरीचदेव-लिपिसुत्तरकुरुद्वीप-लिपिं अपरगौड़ादि-लिपिं पूर्व-विदेहलिपिसुत्तेप-लिपिं निक्षेप-लिपिं विक्षेप-लिपिं प्रक्षेप-लिपिं सागर-लिपिं वज्र-लिपिं

We learn from the 4th *aṅga* called the Samavāya, one of the earliest Jaina works that the character which originated from Brāhmī, daughter of Ādijina Ṛṣabhadēva, is called Brāhmī. The following are the names of 18 sorts of writing headed by Brāhmī:—1 *Bambhī*, 2 *Javanāliyā*, 3 *Dōṣa-ūriyā*, 4 *Kharoṭṭhiyā*, 5 *Kharasāriyā*, 6 *Pahārāiyā*, 7 *Uccatāriyā*, 8 *Akkharaputthiyā*, 9 *Bhōgabayattā*, 10 *Beyanāiyā*, 11 *Nirāhaiyā*, 12 *Aṅka*, 13 *Gaṇiya*, 14 *Gandhavva*, 15 *Ādassa*, 16 *Māhēsara*, 17 *Dāmi* and 18 *Bōlidi-livi*.¹

The fourth Upāṅga, the Prajñāpanā Sūtra of the Jainas gives the following list of 18 sorts of characters:—1 *Bambhī*, 2 *Jabaṇāliyā*, 3 *Dāsapūriyā*, 4 *Kharoṭṭhī*, 5 *Pukkkharasāriyā*, 6 *Bhōgavaiyā*, 7 *Paharāiyā*, 8 *Antarakariyā*, 9 *Akkharaputthiyā*, 10 *Vēṇaniyā*, 11 *Niṇahaiyā*, 12 *Aṅka*, 13 *Gaṇita*, 14 *Gandhavva*, 15 *Āyassa*, 16 *Māhēsari*, 17 *Dāmili* and 18 *Pōlindā*.²

Some may advance the argument that amongst the *lipis* (characters) mentioned above, there is the mention of Dēvalipi, Bhauma-dēvalipi and Antariṣadēvalipi; and one of these might be our Dēva-nāgara, and most probably Dēva-lipi or Bhauma-dēva-lipi has changed its name for our present Dēva-nāgara or Nāgara. But I think that it is wide of the mark to infer that the Nāgarī-lipi is derived from Dēva-lipi, in so much as there is no clear mention of Nāgara or Nāgarī.

लेखप्रतिलेख-लिपिमनुद्गत-लिपिं शास्त्रावर्त-लिपिं गणनावर्त-लिपिसुत्तेपावर्त-लिपिं निचे-
पावर्त-लिपिं पादलिखित-लिपिं द्विरुत्तरपदसन्धि-लिपिं यावद्दशोत्तरपदसन्धि-लिपिसध्या-
हारिणि-लिपिं सर्वरुतसंग्रहणी-लिपिं विद्यानुलोमा-लिपिं विमिश्रित-लिपिमृषितपक्षपां
रोचमानम्बरणी-प्रेक्षण-लिपिं सर्वौषधिनिघन्दां सर्वसारसंग्रहणीं सर्वभूतरुत ग्रहणीमासाभो
उपाध्याय चतुःषष्ठिलिपीनां कतमां-लिपिं मां त्वं शिञ्चयिष्यसि । (ललित. विस्तर १० अ.)

1 वक्षो एणं लिवौए अठारस-विह लेखकविद्वाने । वक्षो जवणालिया दीसजरिया
खरोट्टिया खरसारिया पहाराइया उच्चतरिया अख्करपुत्थिया भोगवयत्ता वेथणतिया निरा-
हइया अंकलिवि गणिलिवि गन्धलिवि आदस्सलिवि माहेसरलिवि दामिलिवि वोलिदि-
लिवि । (समवाय १८ श खान)

The Jainas say that all their *Angas* were written in the time of Mahavīra, and after 164 years from his death (*i.e.*, in 363 B.C.), were collected in the *Ḍrisaṅgha* of Pātāliputra.

2 वक्षो एणस्स लिवौए अठारसविह-लिक्ख-विहाणे पणत्ते नाम् वक्षो जवणालिया
दासपरिया खरोट्टी पुक्खरसारिया भोगवइया पहाराइया उपअन्नरकरिया अक्खर-
पुत्थिया वेणणिया निणहइया अङ्कलिवि गणितलिवि गन्धलिवि आयस्सलिवि माहेसरी
दामिली पीलिनदा सेत्तं भापारिइया । (पन्नवणा) ।

The commentator Malayagiri writes — ब्राह्मीयवनानीत्यादयो लिपिभेदास्तु सम्प्रदा-
यादवशेयः ।

It has been stated about the commencement of this paper that Çeṣa-kṛṣṇa, the writer of the Prākṛta-candrikā, has mentioned Nāgara, Upanāgara, and Daiva among the 27 forms of corrupt languages.¹ Most probably like these three languages three different forms of writing were also current. The Daiva or Bhauma-dēva-lipi mentioned in the *Lalita-vistara* had probably some points of resemblance to the Daiva-lipi or writing of the Dēva-bhāṣā.

But I have not come across any proof to lead me to surmise that Dēva-lipi signifies Nāgarākṣara. Now in some countries Nāgara may mean Dēvanāgarākṣara, but Dēvākṣara has nowhere any such import. In Bengal it is humorously used to denote very bad and illegible writing. Under such circumstances I cannot take Dēvalipi or Bhauma-dēva-lipi as representing our present Nāgarī character.

It is now admitted that the *Lalita-vistara* was composed in the 2nd or 3rd century B.C. The fourth Upāṅga Prajñapanāsūtra was written by Çyāmārya, the first Kālakācārya. On referring to the *Kharataragaccha Paṭṭāvali*, we find that Çyāmārya lived 376 years after Mahāvira's *nirvāṇa* (B.C. 151). Consequently it must be admitted that nearly 2000 years ago there was no *lipi* extant under the name of Nāgara or Nāgarī.

Then when did the name of Nāgara first make its appearance ?

We find the first mention of Nāgarī-lipi in a Jaina religious book, the Nandi-sūtra.² Jainācārya Lakṣmi-vallabha-gaṇi thus speaks in his Kalpasūtra-kalpadruma-kalikā :—

अथ श्री ऋषभभदेवेन ब्राह्मीदक्षिणहस्तेन अष्टादशल्लिपयो दर्शिताः ।
नन्दीसूत्रे उक्ता यथा - १ हंसलिपि २ भूतलिपि ३ यक्षलिपि ४ रा-
क्षसलिपि ५ उडुलिपि ६ यावनलिपि ७ तुरकलिपि ८ कौरीलिपि
९ द्राविडलिपि १० सैन्धवलिपि ११ मालवलिपि १२ नडलिपि
१३ नागरीलिपि १४ पारसीलिपि १५ लाटीलिपि १६ अनिमित्त-
लिपि १७ चाणक्यलिपि १८ मौलदेवी ।

The author then relates :— देशविशेषादन्या अपि लिपयस्तद्यथा —

१ लाटी २ चौडी ३ डाहली ४ कणाडी ५ गूजरी ६ सोरठी ७ मरहठी
८ कौङ्कणी ९ खुरासाणी १० मागधी ११ सिंहेली १२ हाडी १३
कौरी १४ हम्मीरी १५ परतीरी १६ मसी १७ मालवी १८ महायोधी

¹ Even the names of these three corrupt forms of languages have not been found in works earlier than Çeṣa Kṛṣṇa's.

² The South-Indian form of the Nāgarī character usually goes by the name of Nandi-nāgarī.

इत्यादयो लिपयः पुनरङ्गानां गणितकला दर्शिता वामहस्तेन सुन्दरी
प्रतिलिपि दर्शिता ।

The *lipis* mentioned in the Nandī-sūtra are the following:—
1 *Haṁsa-lipi*, 2 *Bhūta-lipi*, 3 *Yakṣa-lipi*, 4 *Rākṣasī-lipi*, 5 *Uḍḍī-lipi*, 6
Yāvanī-lipi, 7 *Turakkī-lipi*, 8 *Kīrī-lipi*, 9 *Drāviḍī-lipi*, 10 *Saindhavi-lipi*,
11 *Mālavī-lipi*, 12 *Naḍī-lipi*, 13 *Nāgarī-lipi*, 14 *Pārasī-lipi*, 15 *Lāṭī-lipi*, 16
Animitta-lipi, 17 *Cānakī-lipi* and 18 *Maulādēvī*.’

‘ (Lipis vary in different countries; the names of them are these) :—
1 *Lāṭī*, 2 *Cauḍī*, 3 *Ḍāhalī*, 4 *Kaṇāḍī*, 5 *Gūjarī*, 6 *Soraṭhī*, 7 *Murahaṭhī*, 8
Kauykanī, 9 *Khurāsānī*, 10 *Māgadhī*, 11 *Sīnhalī*, 12 *Hāḍī*, 13 *Kīrī*, 14
Hammīrī, 15 *Paratīrī*, 16 *Masī*, 17 *Mālavī* and 18 *Mahāyōdhī*.’

Jainācārya says that the Nandī-sūtra was issued a few years before the Kalpa-sūtra. The Kalpa-sūtra was published in Ānandapura (Baḍanagara) 980 years after the death (nirvāṇa) of Mahāvīra (453 A.D.) under the orders of the Valabhi king Dhruva-sēna. So we find that the first mention of Nāgarī-lipi is in the 4th or 5th century A.D. As there is no mention of Nāgarī-lipi in any book of a date earlier than the 4th century, and as there is no certainty of the time when this *lipi* first came into use, it is necessary to look into all the ancient inscriptions, copper-plates, and manuscripts, engraved or written in the Nāgarī, that have been discovered in different parts of India. It therefore requires much investigation and time to ascertain the gradual development of the Nāgarākṣara. I regret that I have not had enough leisure to devote to this research, but I may mention that I have recently learned that Dr. Bühler is going to publish an elaborate work on the Development of the Nāgarī-alphabet; and hence for detailed information, I can commend my readers to his learned article on that subject.

Of all the Nāgarī copper-plates, inscriptions, and manuscripts that have been discovered up to date, the copper-plate of the Gurjara king Dadda-praḥānta-rāga, which has been found in Bagumra and which bears the date of 415 Çaka is the most ancient.¹ The whole of the copper-plate is inscribed in the then-used Gujarātī (cave-character) except towards the close where there is the king’s sign manual in Nāgarī:—

खहस्तोऽयं मम श्रीवितरागसुनो श्रीप्रशान्तरागस्य ।

From the fact that only the royal signature is inscribed in the Nāgarākṣara, it is obvious that although other characters were current in Gujarāta about and before that time, the royal personages were then

¹ *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XVII.

accustomed to write in the Nāgarākṣara. Subsequent to the copper-plate of the above-mentioned Dadda, the Nāgarākṣara is again observed in the copper-plate of the Saurāṣṭra king Jāiṅka-dēva, dated 794 Samvat (737 A.D.), which was discovered in the village of Dhiniki on the sea-coast at the south-east of Dvārakāpurī.¹ This copper-plate was granted to one Iṣvara of the Mudgala *gōtra* by Jāiṅka-dēva, at the request of Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa,² the prime-minister. After this the Sāmāna-

¹ *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XII., p. 155 pl.

² I have something to say about this Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa. Mr. Umēṣa Candra Baṭabyāla published in the Society's *Journal* a copper-plate of Dharmapāla, together with a facsimile. That plate too was granted to Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka, agreeably to the request of *Maha-sāmāntādhipati* Nārāyaṇa Varman. Mr. Baṭabyāl conjectures that Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka is no other than the Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa who came from Kanauj, and from whom have descended all the Čāṇḍilya-gōtra-Brāhmaṇas of Bengal. He writes:—'Having come into Pauṇḍravardhana, Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa found a patron, not in Ādiçūra, as has been hitherto believed, but in one Nārāyaṇa Varman, who in the copper-plate grant is described as the Mahāsāmāntādhipati of Dharmapāla.' But my surmise is that Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka had no connection with that Bhatta Nārāyaṇa who came from Kanauj. The original copper-plate says:—

मत्तमस्तु भवतां महासामन्ताधिपति-श्रीनारायणवर्मणा दूतकयुवराज-श्रीत्रिसुवन-
पालमुखेन वयमेवं विज्ञापिता यथास्त्राभिर्मातापित्रोरात्मनश्च पुण्याभिरुदये शुभस्यत्यां देवकुलं
कारितं तत्र प्रतिष्ठापितभगवद्भूद*नारायणभट्टारकाय तत्प्रतिपालकलाटद्विजदेवार्चकादि-
पादमूलसमेताय पूजोपस्थानादिकर्मणे चतुरो ग्रामानचत्य हट्टिकातलवाटकसमेतान्
ददातु देव इति ।

'It is manifest from the above text that there was a temple in Čubhasṭhālī, and that Lāṭa Brāhmaṇas were employed to worship the idol. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka came to this country, and subsequently settled there, at the request of the Mahāsāmāntādhipati Nārāyaṇa who granted him four large villages.'

Mr. Baṭabyāla supposes that Lāṭa was probably the name of Kānyakubja. But from the proofs collected by me I am confirmed that Lāṭa was never the name of Kānyakubja. The middle, western, and southern parts of Gujarāta were for a long time called Lāṭa, Saurāṣṭra, and Ānartta respectively. It seems that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa who was the prime-minister of Jāiṅka-dēva king of Saurāṣṭra, was an inhabitant of Lāṭa-dēça. It is probable that when a political revolution broke out in his country, he then an old man, travelled over different parts, and then at last came to those Lāṭa Brāhmaṇas in Pauṇḍra-varadhana. That he who was once, as it were, the right hand of the Saurāṣṭra king secured high respect from the royal officers of Pauṇḍravardhana, is not impossible. Mr. Baṭabyāla writes that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa received a gift worth more than a lac of rupees. (*Journal of A. S. B.*, 1894, Pt. I., p. 44). This great gift proves unquestionably a high respect for Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka. It is obvious from the antiquities of India that the title of Bhaṭṭāraka could only be secured by a king or a prince or by a person having similar honour and position. There is no impossibility here that he who once practically ruled Gurjara became famous in Gauḍa under the style of Bhaṭṭāraka. According to the

gaḍa copper-plate grant of Danti-durga Khaḍgāvalōka dated 675 Çaka comes to our notice.¹ The arrangement of letters in this plate is very interesting. The letters *i, ē, gh, c, n, dh, n, v* and *jñ* of this plate have the appearance of the ancient Gujarāti (cave) character, but all the other letters exhibit a development of the Nāgarākṣara. Indeed the circulation of Nāgarākṣara came to be wider owing to the efforts and exertions of the subsequent Rāṣtrakūṭa kings of Gujarāt.² The gradual development of the Nāgarākṣara is regularly observed in the following copper-plates :—

Plate.	Names of the donor.	Dates.	Ref.
1	Rāṣtrakūṭa-king Dhruva II	757 Çaka.	Indian Antiquary, Vol. XIV, p. 200.
2	Indra Nitya-varṣa ...	836 „	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XVIII.
3	Gōvinda Suvarṇa-varṣa...	855 „	Indian Antiquary, Vol. XII, p. 280.
4	Kriṣṇa Akāla-varṣa ...	862 „	Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society, Vol. XVIII.
5	Amōgha-varṣa... ..	894 „	Indian Antiquary, Vol. XII, p. 266.

The likeness of *t, dh, n, ē* and some other letters of the copper-plate of Dhruva II, although inscribed in the most ancient Nāgarākṣara, can be traced to the Guptākṣara; but clear manifestations of modern Nāgarī are met with in the plates of Gōvinda Suvarṇa-varṣa, Indra Nitya-varṣa and Amōgha-varṣa. The vowel-signs of the copper-plate of the

Dhiniki grant, Bhaṭṭa-Nārāyaṇa was in Gujarāta in the year 794 Samvat. Rāja-çēkhara's 'Prabandha-cintāmaṇi' says that the Gauḍa-king Dharma was continually an implacable enemy of Āmarāja, disciple of Jainācārya Bappa Bhaṭṭa. Bappa Bhaṭṭa's *dikṣā* (initiation) took place in 807 Samvat. About that time or a little after, the Gauḍa-king Dharma (pāla) came on the scene. Nārāyaṇa Bhaṭṭāraka in his old age came to Pauṇḍravardhana. Consequently it is proved from the facts of that period, that Bhaṭṭa Nārāyaṇa who came over from Lāṭa-dēça and Dharmapāla were contemporaries. We shall see afterwards that from a very early time Gujarāta had a connection with Gauḍa-dēça.

¹ *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. II, p. 371; and *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. XI, p. 110.

² Discrepancy arises only in the case of the copper-plate of Rāṣtrakūṭa king Karka-suvarṇa-varṣa, dated 734 Çaka, which is inscribed in the cave-alphabet of the Deccan. (*Indian Antiquary*, 1883, p. 153.)

above-mentioned Dadda, Jāiṅka, Dantidurga and Dhruva seem to be derived from the ancient Gupta-lipi and clearly look like the Nāgarākṣara of the earliest stage: but dissimilarity has entered into the plates of Gōvinda Suvarṇa-varṣa and others. The vowel-signs (*e.g.*, τ, τ†, τḷ) as adopted in the plate of Suvarṇa-varṣa and others are similar to those of the Vaṅgiya and the Maithila-lipi. From this it appears that the vowel-signs which are used in the Vaṅgiya and Maithila-lipi are not of recent date, though they have no accordance with those in the Gupta and Nāgarī-lipi, and that they must have existed at least in the 6th or 7th century A.D. Nāgarī-lipi having such vowel-signs is called Jaina-nāgarī in Gujarāt.

The full currency of the Nāgarī-lipi is seen to date from the 9th or 10th century A.D. The forms which this *lipi* came to bear between the 9th or 10th century A.D. are still the same. A very slight difference which may here and there be seen is due to the characteristics of the writer or of the engraver in the different localities.

It is clear from the Jaina-books as well as from the ancient inscriptions stated above, that the Nāgarī-lipi was current during the 5th century A.D. I have said that the Nāgarī-lipi originated from the Nāgara Brahmanas of Nagara-ānanda-pura. These Nāgara Brāhmaṇas are inhabitants of Gujarāt. The most ancient *Nāgarī-lipi*, discovered up to date, is from Gujarāt; and this fact strongly upholds my theory.

But a question may arise here. Antiquarians have described the innumerable inscriptions between the 3rd and 7th centuries A.D. discovered in Gujarāt, to be written in the cave-characters. Most of the ancient inscriptions and copper-plates, found in various parts of the Deccan, are inscribed in such *cave* characters. Given these facts, what led the Nāgara Brāhmaṇas to adopt a character different from that which was current in their own country? A thorough scrutiny of the cave-characters does not allow us to recognise them to be the origin of Nāgarī-alphabet: on the contrary, the Nāgarī-alphabet must be rather said to descend from the ancient form of Gupta-characters. It seems therefore that the most ancient Nāgarī-lipi used in Gujarāt, was brought over by the Nāgara Brāhmaṇas, either from Gauḍa, or Magadha or from some other country in Northern India to Gujarāt. The following is related in the Skanda-purāṇa, Nāgara-khaṇḍa ch. 108: the eminent Trijāta who had delivered Camatkāra-pura from the snakes, gave presents of wealth and jewels and established here in Nagara those Brāhmaṇas who had come with their wives and children to Hāta-kēçvara from the furthest and the most remote countries.¹ From this it

¹ त्रिजातस्य च वाक्त्रेण येन दूरादपि द्रुतम् ।

समागच्छन्ति विप्रेन्द्राः पुरटद्धिः प्रजायते ॥

is manifest that some Brāhmaṇas came from very distant parts to inhabit Nagara.

I have said already that Ānanda-pura is the ancient name of Nagara or Bāḍanagara. The name 'Ānanda-pura' is only seen in the copper-plates of the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries A.D. The Jaina-Kalpa-sūtra states that in response to the orders of the Valabhi king Dhruva-sēna, the Kalpa-sūtra was read out before the public in the city of Ānanda-pura. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsiang saw here many Buddhist Saṅghārāmas as well as a good many Hindu temples. The Hindu temples described by the Chinese pilgrim might have been the temples of Hātakēçvara and others which are described in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa. Now the question is, although about the 4th or 5th century we find the mention of the Nāgarī-lipi in the Nandi-sūtra, what is the cause of the name Nagara not being mentioned in inscriptions or copper-plates of that time, except in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa? It seems probable that during the rule of the Valabhi kings, none of the royal officers who belonged to different religions or orders, recognised this new name given by the Brāhmaṇas. They all called it Ānanda-pura.¹ Probably the locality came to be denominated Nagara during the reign of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa and Caulukya kings who showed great respect and reverence towards the Nāgara Brāhmaṇas.

I have already given the description in the Nāgara-khaṇḍa which says that the Brāhmaṇa Trijāta and his comrades destroyed the race of snakes or drove them away, and thus delivered Hātakeçvara-kṣētra. This I interpret as an allegory. Long before the Valabhi kings, the snake-worshipper Nāga or the Shāh kings had been reigning in Gujarāt. Probably the Çaivas conquered Ānartta after defeating these Nāgas, and founded the Hātakēçvara-kṣētra in order to establish the supremacy of the Çaiva faith. This happened towards the end of the 4th century A.D. Afterwards many Çaiva-Brāhmaṇas gathered there from different countries and assumed the common name of Nāgara. It is probable that some of these immigrants who came from Magadha, Kānyakubja and Gauḍa, brought to their new colony their old alphabet, which in a later period became known as the Nāgarī-lipi. The long residence of these Nāgara Brāhmaṇas in Nagara, is manifest from a work entitled the Sura-

न कश्चिद्याति संसन्ना दौष्ट्यादन्यत्र च द्विजाः ।

ननस्त्रेषां सुतैः पौत्रैर्नमृभिश्च सदृशशः ॥

नत्परं वृद्धिमापन्नैर्दृर्वाङ्कुरैरिव द्विजाः ।

(नागरखण्ड १०८ अः)

¹ In the Nāgara-khaṇḍa there is description of Ānandēçvara Mahādēva: most probably this title of Mahādēva refers to the city of Ānanda-pura.

thōtsava by the famous poet Sōmēçvara the family-priest of the king of Gurjara. It relates :—‘There is a place called Nagara where Brāhmaṇas reside and which is rendered holy by the sacred fires kept by them and the sacrificial rites they perform. The gods themselves seeing the holiness of the place and the prosperity conferred upon it by Çiva live there, as it were, assuming the forms of Brāhmaṇas. At that place dwelt a family of the name of Gulēca of the Vaçiṣṭha gōtra. In that holy family was born Sōla, who was created by Mūlarāja (the founder of the Caulukyia Dynasty of Pāṭana) his family-priest.’¹ Sōmēçvara writes afterwards that his ancestors were hereditary priests of the Caulukyias of Gurjara, and that some also became priests of the Rāṣtrakuṭa kings.²

Mūlarāja reigned in the 10th century A.D. The description of Sōmēçvara proves that the Nāgara-Brāhmaṇas were inhabiting the land long before the time of Mūlarāja, although the name Nagara came into use in his time.

Many Hindu temples stood here in the time of the Chinese pilgrim, about the beginning of the 7th century A.D. According to the Nāgara-khaṇḍa, the Nāgara-Brāhmaṇas founded all the temples and shrines of Nagara or Camatkārapura.

I have already alluded to the clear mention of Nāgarī-lipi in the Nandisūtra, which was composed in the 4th or 5th century A.D., and have referred to the sign-manual of the Gurjara king Dadda-praçāntarāga of that time for the first introduction of the Nāgarī-lipi. It is singular indeed that most of the ancient copper-plates, inscribed in

- ¹ अस्ति प्रश्लाचरणप्रधानं स्थानं द्विजानां नगराभिधानम् ।
 कर्तुं न शक्नोति कदापि यस्य चेतापवित्रस्य कलिः कलङ्कम् ॥
 चक्षुत्पञ्चमखाग्नि-भयतमसि स्थानेच नेचानल-
 ज्वालाप्रज्वलित-प्रसून-धनुषा देवेन दत्तोदये ।
 आविर्भूतमभूतपूर्वैश्चरितश्रेष्ठाद्विशिष्टात्ततः ।
 सत्कर्मोद्गर-मध्वर-स्थितिविदां स्थानेच गोत्रं महत् ॥
 येषामशेषाधिपतिः प्रसन्नः संनद्धपाणिः फणिकङ्कणेन ।
 त एव संभूतिमिहाम्बुवन्ति कुले गुलेचाभिधया प्रसिद्धे ॥
 श्री सोलशर्मा विमलेकुलेऽत्र जन्म द्विजन्मप्रवरः प्रपदे ।
 यः स्वर्गिनः सोमरसेन यागे पितृंश्च पिण्डैरष्टणत्प्रयागे ।
 श्री गुर्जरचित्तिसुजाकिलसूलराजदेवेन दूरमुपरुध्य पुरोधे यः ॥
 (सुरथोत्सव १५१ सर्ग)

- ² दुष्टारि-कोटि-कदनोत्कट-राष्ट्रकूट-कल्पेन शिल्पितरणाङ्गनकौङ्कणेन ।
 सर्वप्रधानपुरुषाधिपतिः प्रतापमन्त्रेण भूपतिमतस्त्रिकया कृतो यः ॥

Nāgarī and found in Gujarāt, were granted to those Brāhmaṇas who came over to Gujarāt from Kānyakubja, Pāṭaliputra, Pauṇḍravardhana, &c. The aforesaid Dadda-praṇānta-rāga's copper-plate of 415 Ḍaka was given to Bhaṭṭa Gōvinda, son of Bhaṭṭa Mahīdhara, an inhabitant of Kānyakubja. Likewise the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Nityavarṣa's plate of 836 Ḍaka, mentions Tēna, a village of Lāṭa-dēḍa, being granted to Siddhapa Bhaṭṭa, son of Vēllapa Bhaṭṭa of the Lakṣmaṇa gōtra, who came from Pāṭaliputra. Similarly the copper-plate grant of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Gōvinda Suvarṇa-varṣa, dated 854 Ḍaka, speaks of the gift of the village of Lōha to Kēḍava Dikṣita of the Kauḍika gōtra, an immigrant from Pauṇḍravardhana. It is quite clear from the proofs given above, that numbers of Brāhmaṇas were from very ancient times immigrating into Gujarāt from Kānyakubja, Pāṭaliputra, Pauṇḍravardhana, &c. In this way the ancient form of the Nāgarī-lipi was brought over and circulated in Gujarāt.

Hundreds of panegyrics inscribed in stone in Baḍanagara, the original dwelling-place of the Nāgara-Brāhmaṇas, declare the extraordinary respect and reverence which the Gurjara kings paid towards them. It is owing to the effort of these Rāṣṭrakūṭa and Caulukya kings of Gurjara, that the Nāgarī-lipi became current in many parts of India. The copper-plate of Karka Suvarṇa-varṣa king of Lāṭa, dated 734 Ḍaka, clearly states :—

गौडेन्द्र-वङ्गपति-निर्जयदुर्विदग्ध-
सद्गुर्जेश्वर-दिगर्गलतां च यस्य ।
नीत्वा भुजं विहृतमालवरक्षार्थं
स्वामी तथान्यामपि राज्यच्छलानि भुङ्क्ते ॥ ¹

Again the following is related in the copper-plate of Akālavarṣa, dated 862 Ḍaka, about Gurjarēḍvara Kriṣṇarāja, son of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa king Nṛpatunga, the founder of Mānyakhēṭa :—

तस्यार्जितं गुर्जरौहृत-हटल्लाटोद्भूट-श्रीमदो
गौडानां विनयव्रतार्पणगुरुः सामुद्र-निद्राहरः ।
द्वारस्थान्ध्र-कलिङ्ग-गाङ्ग-मगधैरभ्यर्चिताञ्जश्चिरं
सूनुः सून्तवाग्भुवः परिवृढः श्रीकृष्णराजोऽभवत् ॥ ²

¹ *Indian Antiquary*, 1883, p. 160.

² *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. XVIII, p. 246.

We come to know from the above extracts that the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings of Gurjara conquered Gauḍa, Vaṅga, Kaliṅga, Gāṅga, Magadha, Mālava, &c., in the 9th and 10th centuries¹ A.D.

So it is beyond doubt, that between the 9th and 10th centuries A.D., during the reign of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings of Gujārāt, the characters of their family-priests the Nāgara-Brāhmaṇas, spread over the whole Āryāvartta under the name of Nāgarī-lipi. Now, the same characters which were once, by the efforts of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa kings, circulated all over the Āryāvartta, have now, by the influence of printing and the deep interest taken by western scholars, spread all over the world.

¹ The famous Rāṭhōr kings of Kanauj were of Rāṣṭrakūṭa origin.

